

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJR 8213

As of February 19, 2009

Brief Description: Amending the state Constitution to change school levy election timing provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Parlette, Tom and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/19/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Brandon Roché (786-7405)

Background: The Washington State Constitution gives school districts the power to levy additional taxes beyond the 1 percent limit on property tax. These excess levies may be authorized on a two through four year basis for school support or two through six years for capital improvements. In 2008 a constitutional amendment was passed allowing for a simple majority vote in order to pass an excess levy for a school district.

School districts may submit a levy proposition to the voters at a special or regular election but not more than twice in 12 months and not more than 12 months prior to the inception of the levy.

A constitutional amendment requires approval by two-thirds vote of each chamber of the Legislature and a majority of the voters at the next general election.

Summary of Bill: This is a constitutional amendment to Article VII, section 2 of the State Constitution.

School districts may submit a levy to voters not more than 18 months prior to the inception of the levy tax.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Effective Date: Upon approval by voters at the next general election.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We would like school districts to have the option to run November levies. The idea is to allow school districts operating on a September to September schedule to approve levies in the November election prior to the school year. This would save money for school districts if they were able to do this.

OTHER: We've been speaking with bond counsel about some of the unintended consequences of this bill. Bond counsel believes this can be done without a constitutional amendment. There is also a concern that the clause calling for levies to not be run more than twice in an 18-month period is a concern. We just want to make sure this is done the right way.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor.

OTHER: Dan Steele, Washington State School District Association.